



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE ARRESTS 9 UNAUTHORIZED ALIENS WORKING ON KEY NAVY SURVEILLANCE / ANTI-SUB AIRCRAFT**

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.-- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service arrested eight United Kingdom citizens and one New Zealand citizen Monday at the Smith-Reynolds Airport who were employed by a company sub-contracted to refit Navy P-3 Orion aircraft.

The arrests are part of ICE's ongoing effort to protect critical national infrastructure and comes under Operation Tarmac, which focuses on airport protection.

The Lockheed P-3 Orion aircraft is the Navy's primary long-range anti-submarine patrol aircraft and is also used for electronic surveillance.

The aliens entered the country under the United States' visa waiver program, which allows citizens of certain countries to use their passport to enter for short business or pleasure stays. They entered the country through various international airports. Aliens are prohibited from accepting employment while here on a visa waiver.

A review of Homeland Security records determined that none of the aliens had attempted to adjust their immigration status in order to work here legally.

All were employed at the airport by Aerospace Manufacturing, Inc. The aliens are known to have actually performed work on the Navy aircraft.

"This incident greatly concerns us given the fact that in March we arrested 27 aliens illegally working at another North Carolina airport," said ICE Resident Agent-in-Charge Tom O'Connell. "ICE is committed to ensuring that access to critical infrastructure such as the aviation industry is restricted to authorized personnel and that vulnerabilities in the immigration system are not exploited."

The following United Kingdom citizens were arrested: John Allen, Andrew Tucker, Robert Donnelly, Brett Wilson, Gary Butler, David Grimshaw, Christopher Gee, and Andrew Brown.

Also arrested was James Kirkwood, a citizen of New Zealand.

All are presently in detention and have been placed into removal proceedings for violations of the visa waiver program (Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act). ICE intends to revoke the visa waiver status of each alien and remove them from the country. The respective embassies have been notified.

To date, ICE agents have conducted investigations at 200 airports and audited more than 5,800 businesses as part of Operation Tarmac. As a result, more than 5,800 unauthorized airport workers have been identified, more than 1,100 unauthorized alien workers have been arrested, and 775 criminal indictments have been issued.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*